

VZCZCXRO0175
OO RUEHAG RUEHROV
DE RUEHVI #1176/01 2270618
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 140618Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0778
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNNSG/NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0281
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0474

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VIENNA 001176

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR ISN/RA (KOCA), ISN/NESS (DELABARRE), SCA/RA
(MCCLELLAN), AND SCA/PPD (SULLIVAN)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2018

TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [AORC](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRIANS REMAIN UNDECIDED ON NSG DRAFT EXCEPTION
FOR INDIA

REF: A. STATE 85948

[1](#)B. VIENNA 1058

Classified by: Ambassador David F. Girard-diCarlo for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) The Ambassador discussed reftel A points August 13 with Johannes Kyrle, MFA SecGen. He emphasized that the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Initiative is of vital importance to the USG, and to the global non-proliferation regime. He stressed that the NSG needs to act quickly in order for the Initiative to be completed this year. Austria and other NSG members who have concerns about the Initiative should discuss the matter before the August 21-22 plenary, so that members are prepared to make a decision at the plenary. (Note: The Ambassador spoke to Kyrle after being unable to reach FM Plassnik, who was attending the EU GAERC in Brussels, and State Secretary Winkler, who was on leave. End Note).

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador told Kyrle that the USG was sensitive to the fact that Austria will hold national elections in September, and GOA leaders feel pressure from Austrian opponents of the Initiative. At the same time, he stressed, the GOA needs to understand that the Indian Government took a great political risk in accepting the Initiative.

[1](#)3. (C) Kyrle said MFA officials were still intensely discussing the Initiative and he could not say what position the GOA would take at the NSG plenary. He thanked the Ambassador for the call and said GOA leaders understood the U.S. position and the need for quick action. He said he would convey the U.S. position to FM Plassnik when she returns from Brussels late August 13 or early August 14.

[1](#)4. (C) The Charge also discussed reftel A points August 12, while the Ambassador was on official travel, with Ralph Scheide, Acting MFA Poldir, and Nicole Bayer, Acting Foreign Policy Advisor to the Chancellor. Scheide said the GOA shares the USG's views concerning the larger goals of the Initiative, and the specific benefits of bringing India into the international non-proliferation framework. However, he said, the GOA objects to certain elements of the text of the exception for India. Scheide noted that paragraph 2 of the exception text states that the listed nonproliferation commitments and actions are voluntary. Moreover, the permission granted in paragraph 3 a. and b. to transfer nuclear related materials to India is not explicitly contingent on India's fulfillment of the non-proliferation actions in paragraph 2. He averred that Austria, and a significant number of other "like-minded" NSG members, would prefer to see a text that more clearly required India to carry out the non-proliferation actions.

[1](#)5. (C) Bayer emphasized to the Charge that the GOA does not

believe it will be possible for the NSG to reach a decision at the August 21-22 plenary. She said NSG members will need to have a thorough discussion and debate before reaching a decision, and this will require more than one plenary. The Charge vigorously disagreed, arguing that it should be quite possible to reach a decision August 21-22 if NSG members seriously discuss the relevant issues in the remaining days before the plenary. It would be a mistake to go into next week's plenary with an assumption from the outset that a second plenary would be necessary.

¶6. (C) The Charge noted that the Initiative, and the exception text, were the result of long negotiations between the U.S. and India. The effort has resulted in an agreement that both sides can accept. This is an opportunity to forge a new relationship with India and bring India into the international non-proliferation structures for the first time. This is clearly a net gain for non-proliferation, which explains why IAEA Director ElBaradei has offered his strong backing.

¶7. (C) The Charge encouraged GOA officials to raise their concerns directly with the Indians. Scheide said that Alexander Marschik, MFA disarmament director, had met with the Indian Ambassador August 11, but Marschik left Vienna the next day and Scheide did not have a readout of the meeting.

Comment: Domestic Political Concerns

¶8. (C) Our GOA interlocutors did not emphasize domestic political concerns in these latest meetings, but they have

VIENNA 00001176 002 OF 002

frequently done so in the past. State Secretary Winkler, Poldir Mayr-Harting and others have averred to us that it would be difficult for Austria to approve the India exception "without a fight" in the run-up to the September 28 national elections. They also made this point to U/S Burns during his July visit (reftel B). The Austrian public and political class is starkly opposed to nuclear energy. Unlike the IAEA board's procedure of reaching consensus without a vote, the NSG reaches decisions based on unanimity, meaning that Austria theoretically has a veto. That leaves the GOA with no political cover against Austrian opponents of the Initiative. Our contacts argue that the GOA needs show that it managed to add something to "improve" the exception text. How committed they are to that goal may depend on how much backing they get from "like-minded" governments.
Girard-diCarlo